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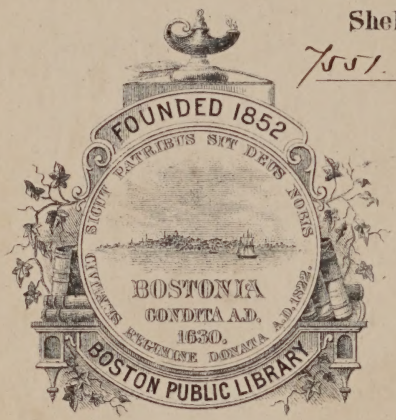

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REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

CONNECTION BETWEEN MARRIAGE

AND THE

CHURCH IN MAN.

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MADE TO THE GENERAL CONVENTION,

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REPORT.

THERE are probably in the writings of Swedenborg no subjects which occupy a more prominent place than do the sanctity and the uses of the marriage relation. Particularly prominent in these writings is the idea that man's state in regard to marriage, and his religious state,—his state in the church, are most intimately connected together. This idea pervades the work on Conjugial Love.

This view, so prominent in the doctrines, may well engage our profound attention. There is probably no other subject upon which we could speak, if we speak judiciously, with more hope of producing important practical results. It is true that in what we say in relation to marriage, there is need of the greatest circumspection and care. The place in our minds of the love that forms the basis of the marriage relation is the most sacred of all. Words here are things; and they affect most directly and vividly, in one way or another, the peace of the soul.

Extract from the Doctrine of Life showing the Connection.

By way of introducing the views on the subject which we propose to submit to the Convention, one or two extracts from Art. IX. of the work on the "Doctrine of Life," will be recited. The heading of the article is this: "THAT SO FAR AS ANY ONE SHUNS ADULTERIES OF EVERY KIND AS SINS, SO FAR HE LOVES CHASTITY."

The article proceeds as follows:

"By adultery, in the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, in the natural sense, is not only meant whoredom, but also all obscene acts, all wanton discourse, and all filthy, unclean thoughts; but by committing adultery in the spiritual sense, is meant to adulterate the good things of the Word, and to falsify its truths; and in the supreme sense, by committing adultery is meant to deny the Lord's Divinity, and to profane the Word: these are

the several kinds of adultery. The natural man, by means of his rational light, may know that by adultery is meant every obscene act, all wanton discourse and every filthy thought; but he does not know that by committing adultery is also meant to adulterate the good things of the Word, and to falsify its truths; and still less that it means the denying of the Lord's Divinity, and profaning the Word: hence he does not know that adultery is so great an evil as that it may be called essentially diabolical: *for whosoever is principled in natural adultery is also in spiritual adultery, and* VICE VERSA: that this is the case will be demonstrated in a particular treatise concerning conjugial love. *But they are at once in adulteries of every kind, who do not regard adulteries as sins both in faith and life.*"

In a subsequent number of the same article is this:

"From what has been said it may without difficulty be concluded and seen whether a man be a Christian or not; yea, whether he has any religion or not: for whosoever does not regard adulteries as sins, in faith and life, is not a Christian, neither has he any religion. But on the other hand, whosoever shuns adulteries as sins, especially if he holds them in aversion by reason of their being sins, and, still more, if he abominates them on that account has religion, and if he be in the Christian church, is a Christian."—n. 77.

What is taught in this.

From this last extract it evidently appears that there is such a connection between abstinence from adultery and religion or Christianity, that if a man does not in faith and life abstain from the former, he has no real religion, and if he belongs to the Christian Church, is not a real Christian; and that if a man does in faith and life shun adultery as sin, he has real religion, and if he is in the Christian Church, is a real Christian. It is, of course, also true, that if a man does not shun as sin, murder and hatred, theft, false witness, fraud, and covetousness—evils forbidden in other commandments—he has no real religion, and if he be in the Christian Church, is not a real Christian; and that the contrary is the case, if he does shun those evils as sins: but from the fact that Swedenborg so pointedly brings out the

idea in explaining this particular commandment, we see that there is a special connection between having real religion, and being a real Christian, and shunning adultery as sin. Something of the reason why it is true, emphatically, that the unchaste have no religion, and are not Christians, will appear in what follows.

To return now to the first extract:

"Whosoever is principled in natural adultery, is also in spiritual adultery, and *vice versa:*" that is, whosoever is principled in spiritual adultery is also in natural adultery. Furthermore, "They are at once in adulteries of every kind, who do not regard adulteries as sins both in faith and life."

From the remark, "*whosoever is principled in natural adultery, is also in spiritual adultery, and vice versa,*" we see that if a man does not shun as sins, not only obsence acts, but also impure language, and impure thoughts, he is in the spiritual evil of adulterating the goods and falsifying the truths of the Scriptures, and also of denying the Lord's Divinity and profaning the Word; and that if a man denies the Lord's Divinity, profanes the Word, and adulterates its goods and falsifies its truths, he is—inwardly, of course, though he may not be outwardly, in natural adultery also.

From the remark, "*They are at once in adulteries of every kind, who do not regard adulteries as sins, both in faith and life,*" we see that there is such a connection between the three kinds or degrees of adultery, that being as to the mind in the lowest kind involves being in the higher kinds also—so involves this, that the case cannot possibly be otherwise.

Nothing arbitrary in this.

There might possibly, at first view, appear to be something arbitrary or gratuitous in these declarations, which make of adultery such a diabolical evil. But there is nothing at all arbitrary or gratuitous in them: and if we see the subject in anything of true rational light, we shall understand why the facts are, and must be, as has been stated.

Rational Comtemplation.

Let us then turn our attention to the subject, and endeavor to understand it; so that we may see and acknowledge the truth of what Swedenborg declares.

Keeping the Sixth Commandment, and the Effect.

We need, in the first place, to contemplate the keeping of the commandment in question, in the natural sense, that is, shunning as sin not only impure acts, but also impure conversation and impure thoughts. The consequence of doing this, as declared in the caption of the article from which extracts have been made, will be, coming under the influence of a love of chastity.

The reason is, that we are recipients of what we have; that if we do not shun what is impure as sin, we are in connection with hell, and are under the influence of evil spirits; and that when we do shun what is impure as sin, evil spirits are removed from us by the Lord, and we are brought into connection with Him and with heaven, and act under their influence. This is the reason why we have chaste feelings and thoughts, and are pure in our love, when we shun what is impure as sin. But when we avoid the evil which is opposed to marriage, when we avoid evil in those things in us which constitute the ground of marriage, when, because it is sin, we avoid every impure act, word, and thought, we shut out evil *in its very central form.* The love in question enters deeper with man than any other. It has its origin in his very inmost. Because this love holds this high place, if we are impure, the very entrance gate of the Lord and heaven into our souls is closed; and if we are pure, the everlasting doors are lifted up, that "the King of glory may come in." That the love of which we are speaking holds this high place, every thing testifies. Who does not know that this love holds this pre-eminent place with him? It is a further proof of the truth we are contemplating, that by the operation of this love, the soul of man as it were reproduces itself, as a tree reproduces itself through the seed. A further evidence of the central and elevated character of this love is, that with it is associated the highest of all delights; and when man, from regard for the

Lord, submits to be controlled by Him, and not by himself, in the enjoyment of these delights, when he consents in these to give up his selfish pleasure, and consents to receive one which is unselfish and pure, he will, of course, act in a corresponding manner with regard to other delights.

From what has been said it evidently appears that obedience to the commandment forbidding adultery, opens the inmost of man and woman to the Lord; and brings them as to the higher parts of their mind under His influence.

By avoiding impurity as sin, then, the inmost of man and woman, the very entrance gate of the Lord into the mind, is opened. And when the mind is opened towards the Lord, holy things enter it from Him. When the mind is closed, when its inmost is shut, as it is when the interior feelings which have relation to marriage are not regulated by the Divine law, no holy things from the Lord can enter. We have no right feelings in regard to Him and His laws; no just sense of our duty to Him and to our neighbor; no conscience of what is right and good; no true faith; no true repentance; no true charity; because it is impossible that these should exist in us, except from the Lord; and impossible that they should be received, except from the opening of the mind towards Him. But when the inmost of our mind is opened to the Lord, as it is when we act from His law in the things of it relating to marriage, through the open door in our souls the Lord can enter, and inspire us with conscience, with repentance, with faith, with charity, and every spiritual good. He can open our understanding to understand the Scriptures, and can cause our hearts to burn with love of the truths of His Word. But it needs no proof that he has no religion and that he is not a Christian, into whose mind the Lord cannot enter, and inspire such good things as have been specificed; and equally clear is it that he into whom the Lord can enter and produce such results, has religion, and if he is in the Christian Church, is a Christian.

He who is in Natural Adultery, also adulterates and falsifies the Scriptures.

But the doctrine we are considering not only teaches that he

who does not shun what is opposite to marriage, has no religion, and that he who does shun it has religion; it also teaches that he who is in adultery in the natural sense, that is, he who has not put away the inclination to it in his mind, is in it also in a spiritual sense, and, which is the same thing, is in a disposition to adulterate and falsify the Scriptures; and that he who pursues the opposite course, regards and receives the Scriptures in a proper manner.

Distinction between Man and Woman.

This latter truth it will help us to understand, to bring to view the character of the inmosts of man and woman, where is the seat of the love in which marriage originates. Respecting these Swedenborg teaches as follows: "The distinction" (between the masculine and the feminine) "consists essentially in this; that the inmost in the masculine is love, and the covering of this is wisdom; or, what is the same thing, that it is love veiled with wisdom; and that the inmost of the female is that wisdom of the male, and its covering is the love thence."—C. L. n. 32.

From this it is evident that a man is so constituted by the Lord, that when his inmost is open to Him, love enters, and forms his very central life. His inmost, when open, is a form receptive of love from the Lord. But love can do nothing—it is powerless—without wisdom. Love, the Lord's love, is a desire and effort to do good: but it can do this only by the aid of the truths of wisdom, teaching what things are good, and how they are to be effected. Hence good from the Lord in the inmost of man makes him a seeker of the truth by which his good may come forth. And not only is the good which flows into man's mind from the Lord *powerless* without truth, it is also inconspicuous and hidden. It shows itself, can be seen, only in the pursuit of truth; in the avidity with which it is sought; and in the delight with which it is received. In a pure-minded man, zealously and lovingly seeking the truth, successfully pursuing the investigation of it, we see the embodiment of an inmost love, covering or clothing itself with wisdom. When a thing is veiled, we see the veil clearly, and the object veiled obscurely. So with man: his investigations of truth, and the results, we see

clearly; but the love within appears only obscurely. So far in regard to man. The inmost of the woman is this wisdom of the man. The wisdom which man, under the influence of love from the Lord, acquires, and which constitutes the inmost of the woman, flows also immediately from the Lord into the mind of woman.* Her inmost, open to the Lord, is a form of wisdom. But as love without wisdom in man is utterly powerless, inefficient, and inconspicuous, so also is wisdom without love in woman. And as man must acquire genuine wisdom, in order to be able to bring into effect the love of his inmost, so woman must acquire genuine love, in order to bring her inmost wisdom into effect. As the covering of man's inmost,—that which is most conspicuous, is his pursuit of wisdom; so the covering of woman's inmost,—that which is apparently most characteristic of her, is the exercise and acquisition of love. Her occupation is not like man's, the successful investigation of what is true, and evolving what was before unknown to her; but still the wisdom which makes her inmost, is instantly manifested, when she inwardly recognizes the truth which man, by his capacity of acquiring wisdom, evolves.

Use and Abuse of Man's peculiar Faculties.

In connection with these observations, it is not difficult to see—indeed, it is most clear—that man, having received in his inmost love for the Lord, in consequence of regulating his deepest feelings by the Divine law, will desire and seek wisdom from the Lord as the means of bringing that love into effect. The prayer of his heart, dictated by the Lord's love, is, "Make me to understand, and I shall live." His spontaneous feeling is, "O how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day. Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies, through thy commandments, for they are ever with me." "How sweet are thy words to my taste; sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore every false way do I hate." Ps. cxix. Such pure love of the truth of the Scriptures is the

* See C. L. n. 165, where it appears that the things of man's rational wisdom are with woman "*from within.*" It appears evident also that as man receives love immediately from the Lord and mediately through the wife, so woman receives wisdom immediately from the Lord, as well as mediately through the husband.

opposite of what is meant by adulterating and falsifying them. Precisely opposite to this will be the state, in regard to what the Scriptures teach, of him who does not regulate his feelings in regard to what is connected with marriage by the Divine law. The inmost of such a one is not open to the Lord, is not receptive of good from Him—of the good which gives a genuine affection for the truth. On the contrary, his inmost receives love opposite to the Lord's. The love which he receives is not a love of real good. It is self-love,—a love which only seeks self-aggrandizement and self-gratification. This love has no pure desire for truth,—has no desire for truth as such. It has no love for the genuine teachings of the Scriptures, and no love of the Scriptures at all, except it can in some way make them subservient to its evil ends. But to make such a use of the Scriptures is to adulterate and falsify them. It is not possible that one whose inmost is closed to the Lord, in consequence of his not shunning adultery as sin, should be in any other state than this in regard to the Scriptures. Such is the connection between natural and spiritual adultery; and so emphatically true is it, that he who is in the first is also in the last.

The same in Relation to Woman.

So far, however, we have only considered the connection of natural with spiritual adultery in man. Let us now consider their connection in woman.

As we have seen, there flows into the inmost of woman, when she avoids impurity as sin against the Lord, wisdom from Him. But this wisdom cannot come into active and conscious existence, except by being united with love: for nothing exists from love alone, or from wisdom alone; but from the union of the two. And where love is, there is an intense desire of wisdom; and where wisdom is, there is an intense desire of love; that by union the one and the other may come into action and full existence. As man obtains the means of bringing out the love which he receives in his inmost, by acquiring wisdom, and uniting it with that love; so woman acquires the means of bringing forth the wisdom received in her inmost, by acquiring love. But how does she acquire it? She acquires it by exercising a pure love of the

wisdom of man just mentioned, which genuine wisdom is an outward embodiment of what flows into the inmost of the pure-minded woman from the Lord. Now because the mind of the woman who shuns impurity as sin, is open to the Lord, and because wisdom from Him forms her inmost, she will have a desire and inclination to come into the exercise of true love; and when she sees in tangible form true wisdom, she will exercise a pure and true love of it. That is, she will love it, not because, for some other reason, she loves the man in whom she sees the wisdom embodied; but she will love the man, because he does embody the wisdom, and only for that reason. But as we have seen, true wisdom in him who possesses it is from a right understanding of the Scriptures. Now to love the genuine wisdom derived from the Scriptures, is the very opposite of adulterating and falsifying them.

This shows that the woman who does avoid adultery in the natural sense, avoids it also in the spiritual sense; but it will also aid us in seeing that she who does not shun it in the natural sense, is in it in the spiritual sense. That which enters the inmost of the woman, who, upon that deepest of all matters is not governed by the Divine law, is not wisdom from the Lord, but folly from hell. This gives birth, not to the pure love of wisdom,—not to love of man as the embodiment of such wisdom, but to love of him as suited by his peculiar characteristics to minister to the gratification of selfish, impure loves in her. She loves wisdom, or talent, in him, not as calculated to make them both better, and as operating to that end; but because those qualities in him contribute to her aggrandizement, and to the gratification of her self-love. If he is intelligent in church affairs, and learned in Scripture doctrine; if he is capable of speaking eloquently and pathetically upon the truths of religion, she loves him for these things, only as they minister to her selfishness and pride. Now such love as this for the things of the Scriptures — for sacred things — is not a pure love. It is an impure one; and to use the Scriptures, and the things which they teach, in this manner, is to adulterate and falsify them: and hence it clearly follows, that she who does not shun as sin, impurity in the natural sense, is in it also in the spiritual sense.

Further View of the Connection between Natural and Spiritual Marriage and Adultery.

By pursuing the idea of the relation between man and woman declared in the extract given from Swedenborg, we shall see even more clearly the intimate connection between marriage in the lower sense and spiritual marriage, which is the receiving in union and without perversion the goodness and truth of the Scriptures.

What is it that constitutes the real interior union between a husband and wife? Into his inmost there flows from the Lord love, pure love. This love gives him a desire of truth, and leads him to receive without perversion the genuine truths of the Scriptures. In coming to an understanding and acknowledgment of these truths, he has done a good work: but he has not yet reached the end which the good he receives from the Lord desires and seeks, that is, to *do* good,—to come forth in uses: and in order that this may be accomplished, the man—the husband—needs aid. He has had such a manifest agency in the evolution of truth, that he will be prompted to feel pride and self-gratulation in connection with what he has done. Here comes in the use of the wife. Her inmost,—that which flows into her inmost from the Lord,—is this wisdom of her husband. Unconsciously she receives immediately from the Lord, and thence has hidden within, above her direct consciousness, the wisdom for which her husband has labored, and which he is inclined to love himself for. But she is under no such temptation; because she has had nothing directly to do with procuring this wisdom. From this wisdom in her inmost from the Lord, she loves it purely in her husband,—loves him for receiving and being a medium of it: and then he loves her, for taking him out of himself, and for bringing to its fulness in its proper form the love which flows into his soul from the Lord.

From this we see that there is a most intimate connection between outward marriage and spiritual marriage; indeed, that the coming into union of a husband and wife involves the union of goodness with truth in each of them, and even produces that union. But the goodness and truth united are those of the

Scriptures. Therefore, the marriage of husband and wife, in an important sense, makes one with the opposite of adulterating and falsifying the Scriptures,—makes one with a pure reception of their goodness and truth. Consequently, the opposite of the marriage of husband and wife, makes one with the adulteration and falsification of the Scriptures.

Connection between Natural and Inmost Adultery.

Thus much as to the declaration that they who are in natural adultery are also in spiritual adultery. But the doctrine is, that "they are at once in adulteries of *every* kind, who do not regard adulteries as sins, both in faith and life." Adultery in the supreme sense is denying the Lord's Divinity, and profaning the Word. In this sense they are in adultery who do not shun it as sin in the lowest and outward sense.

Rational Contemplation of this.

How does it appear, that neglecting to avoid impure acts, words, and thoughts, as sin, involves a denial of the Lord's Divinity? A slight rational consideration of the matter will make this manifest.

When a man is governed by the Divine precepts in the things relating to marriage, in the very depths of his soul he recognizes his dependence upon the Divine Being, and his obligations to that Being. And then, when in consequence of this supreme regard for God, the inmost of the mind of the man is opened to the reception of love from Him, and the inmost of the mind of the woman to the reception of wisdom from Him, their great desire is to be led and governed by Him. Their prayer is, "For Thy name's sake lead me and guide me." "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. x. 23.) They both know, and most profoundly acknowledge, that Jehovah alone can lead them. But when they come to feel it as a practical necessity, that they must be led by God, they feel an absolute need of seeing Him, of knowing Him, and of having His presence with them.

Let us contemplate a moment the need of those who desire to

be led by God, of seeing Him, and having His presence with them.

We have proof of the fact that it is necessary for those who desire to be led by God, to see Him, in the following passage from the gospel: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (Jno. i. 18.) It is a very plain inference from this, that the Lord, in coming into the world, supplied the need of man of seeing God. And this involves another fact, that man cannot be properly affected and led by God, without seeing Him.

That the Divine presence with those who desire to be led by God is also necessary, we can see from what the Lord said to the disciples in relation to this matter. He speaks of sending to them the Comforter, who "shall abide with them forever;" and says, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." His saying this to the disciples, shows us their need of the Divine presence with them. Now because the Lord's disciples need to see God and to have His sensible presence with them, in order to be effectually led by Him, therefore they are ready to recognize the means which He has provided for this end, and most joyfully avail themselves of it. The means by which it has been provided that men may see God, and have His sensible presence with them, is His assuming Humanity, and glorifying it. By assuming Humanity, and making it Divine, the Divine Being made it possible, in what is a real practical sense to us, to see Him, and to have a perception of His presence. We are natural; and we can see things, and have an effective sense of their presence with us, only as they partake somewhat of the natural. By assuming Humanity in the world, the Divine Being brought out what is Divine in what is natural,—brought it out in what is distinctly apprehensible by us. Our Lord and Saviour was a natural man in the world. Divine as to His inmost, He had natural faculties, and a natural body. At first these faculties and this body derived much from the mother, and so far were merely human. But by degrees what was merely human was put off, and what was Divine was put on in the place of it. But, as was said, the Divine put on was Divine Natural: the Natural was transfigured:

it possesses Divine characteristics, but still it remains natural. The Divine faculties put on in the place of the merely human faculties are Divine Natural faculties; and the Divine body put on in in the place of the merely material one, is a Divine Natural Body. But, of course, Divine Natural Faculties, and a Divine Natural Body, are possessed of Divine attributes, such as Infinity, Eternity, Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence. When we see these attributes in connection with what is natural, we have a sense of what is Divine, which is practical and real to us. Because He is Infinite and Eternal, we know that He is not limited by space or time. We know that He is here and everywhere, now and at all times, as really as He was in Judea, when He appeared outwardly in the world. We know that He is as really present with us even bodily, always, as a man who is present in the flesh. We know this in our mind. The faculties we have show this to be the truth so fully, that we practically see Him. We see and know that He is actually with us: and His words—what the Scriptures contain—are not to us the words of one who lived ages ago, or of one who, far distant in space, has written a communication to us; but the words of one who lives now, and who now in all fulness is with us, communicating as manifestly and clearly as if the sound of a voice could be heard.

It is only sight of the Lord, and sense of His presence, which partake somewhat of these qualities, that give Him a real practical influence over us, or satisfy our needs, if our inmosts are open to Him, and if we desire to be led by Him. This, which is the truth in regard to the Lord's Divinity, they who desire to be led by God will believe, because this is the means by which the end they desire can be accomplished. It is only by a heartfelt recognition of the Lord's Divinity—such is our nature—that what is Divine can have its proper practical influence over us. "Unless ye believe that I am," (this is, in effect,—believe the Lord's Divinity,) "ye shall die in your sins."

The truth that they will believe in the Lord's Divinity, whose inmost is opened by conforming to the Divine law, in those deepest things relating to marriage, is quite clearly seen in such passages as these. "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (John vi. 44.) "Every man,

therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (Ver. 45.)

The drawing of the Father to the Lord, is the desire to be led by God, leading to the Lord—to the Divine made Natural—as the means. The same is involved in the other expression.

What we have been saying proves that they who shun adulteries as sins, will acknowledge the Lord's Divinity: but the form of the truth we are considering is, that they who do not shun adulteries as sins, deny the Lord's Divinity. It will be observed, that, of the two expressions which we have just quoted from the Scriptures, one is positive, and the other is negative: one teaches who will acknowledge the Lord's Divinity,and the other who cannot. "Every man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." This is the positive. This teaches what we have been considering. "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." This is the negative. This teaches that they cannot acknowledge tho Lord's Divinity, whose inmost is not opened to the Divine by a regard for the Divine law in that which is of the inmost interest. The declaration that they who are not drawn of the Father, cannot come to the Lord, denotes that they have no disposition or will to do it. A man really does only what he is disposed and wills to do: and though he can, outwardly, in some sense, do what he is indisposed to do; yet real doing, in the sense of the Scriptures, is more than this: and a thing is not done in that sense, unless it is willed. The inability is an indisposition. No man can come unless drawn by the Father, means that a man who does not, in relation to marriage, which is of inmost interest to him, conform to the Divine law, has no desire of that aid which the Lord came into the world to furnish, and therefore has no disposition to see Him, or come to Him. Because his inmost is not open to the admission of the Divine, he has no interest in that which will give the Divine a practical influence over him,—that which brings a knowledge of the Divine, and a sense of the presence of the Divine, into that natural region where man is. It is, in short, nothing else than a sense of a practical need of being led by God, that makes one acknowledge the Lord's Divin-

ity: and it is nothing but a want of this sense of practical need, that makes one deny the Lord's Divinity.

But the doctrine teaches that he who does not shun adulteries as sins, not only denies the Lord's Divinity, but also profanes the Word. The Word is the Word of the Lord, and from this cause there appertains to it a Divine sanctity. To profane it is to divest it of this Divine sanctity. Men do divest it of this, when they have not a practical reverence for it as Divine, and a practical sense of its sanctity; and they are destitute of these, when they deny the Lord's Divinity: for to deny this is to exclude the Divine from that region in which our practical thoughts and affections are, and to exclude Him from those instructions which He has given in His Word, to direct our faith and govern our life. In the mind of him who does not honestly desire to be led in his life by the Lord, as he does not whose inmost is not opened to Him by shunning as sin what is opposite to marriage, there is not a real regard for the Bible as holy. It is denied the sanctity which belongs to it, and consequently is profaned.

From these observations we may have, perhaps, some more clear, rational apprehension of the truth of the doctrine, that he is *at once* in adulteries of every kind, who does not regard adulteries as sins in faith and life.

Practical Deductions. What is said of Marriage in the Scriptures.

The doctrine of the church which we have been considering is very suggestive. It is interesting in connection with the fact, that so much is said about marriage and the opposite in the Scriptures. The Scriptures do not treat of merely natural things. They use, however, natural things as the symbols of spiritual things. When it is said: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready;" and when the Lord calls the Jews a wicked and *adulterous* generation, natural marriage and the opposite are not the things particularly meant. But what a force and emphasis are given to these and the very great number of similar things in the Scriptures, when we bear in mind the fact that he who is in true natural marriage, is also in spiritual marriage; that he who shuns adulteries as sins, unites in his

mind the goodness and truth of the Scriptures, and acknowledges the Lord's Divinity and the holiness of the Word ; and when we bear in mind also, that he who does not shun adulteries as sins, adulterates and falsifies the Scriptures, and denies the Divinity of the Lord and profanes the Word ; when we bear this in mind, we can understand how the highest spiritual things are involved, although only what is natural appears in the letter.

The Sombre Picture.

Again ; when we have the truth, not only that they who do not shun adulteries as sins, are also in spiritual adultery ; but that they also who are in the latter, are also inwardly in the former, it gives rise to reflections of a most important character. The doctrine implies that they who deny the Lord's Divinity, and deny the Divine sanctity of the Scriptures, and misinterpret, adulterate, and falsify them, are inwardly in the disposition, which will, at least when external restraints are removed, come forth in what is directly opposite to marriage. If we were to suppose that this is the character of all who apparently falsify the Scriptures, use them for selfish purposes, deny their sanctity and the Lord's Divinity, it would be a very painful subject of contemplation. It is certainly true, that they who really do these latter things, and have actually appropriated to themselves the disposition to do them, are inwardly in the opposite of the purity of marriage. But it is very probably the case, that hereditary bias, and the force of education, connected with want of time and opportunity to attend successfully to religious studies and reflection, ought to soften and mitigate very much the apparent darkness of the picture.

A Cheering Prospect.

Another reflection is suggested by its opposition to the one just given. It is said in the Revelation, that John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The Holy City, we know, is the New Church ; and her preparation as a bride has primary reference to the state of those who constitute it, as to spiritual marriage. It means that she will be in acknowledg-

ment of heart of the Lord's Divinity—the Divinity of His Humanity, and of the Divine sanctity of the Scriptures; and that she will honestly receive the genuine truths and the genuine goodnesses of the Scriptures. Now, when we bear in mind the fact—which needs no other distinct proof than what appears in what has been said—that they who are in spiritual marriage are also inwardly in pure natural marriage, the prospect as to the state of the New Church in regard to this latter, it is most pleasant and delightful to contemplate. As the New Church is to be eminently in the spiritual marriage, it is to be eminently in the purity and blessedness of the natural also.

Great Means of Spiritual Progress.

Another reflection, however, which should be most intimately connected with this, is, that the state, feelings, and course of action, in relation to natural marriage, are the basis of the spiritual, and not the contrary. The only way in which we come into the spiritual marriage is by shunning as sins impure acts, words and thoughts, the things opposed to natural marriage. And not only do the men of the church become such—come into the spiritual marriage which makes them such, by shunning as sin natural impurity, they make progress in the spiritual marriage—advance in the clearness of their perception and acknowledgment of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity, in their reverence for the Scriptures, and in intelligence and love derived from them, just according as they make progress, and are improving in such things as are connected with natural marriage. A husband prospers spiritually—advances in spiritual intelligence and goodness, just according to his faithfulness and success in performing the duties of a husband to his wife; and a wife also makes successful progress in spiritual life, just according as she fulfils the duties of a wife to her husband.

In like manner, young men and young women, not yet married, enter auspiciously or otherwise upon true spiritual life, according as they carefully avoid as sinful, whatever is opposed to purity of mind and act in relation to marriage.

Importance of the Subject to the Young.

Our final reflection relates particularly to the great interest of this subject in relation to the young. Whether or not they become spiritual at all; whether or not they will come into the church; whether or not they will have any real interest in spiritual things,—will approach and worship the Lord, reverence the Scriptures, and understand and receive the goodness and truth brought down in them by the Lord to men, depends, above all else, upon this simple thing, whether or not, in intention and act, they avoid as sin what is contrary to chastity: for the love to which this relates enters deeper than any other, and has its seat even at the entrance gate of the Lord with spiritual and heavenly things into the mind. If, therefore, what is right in regard to this is not done, religion, which has its seat in this same region, is excluded; and there will be no sincere interest in anything relating to it. But if impurity is avoided as evil, infernal and abominable, the region where is the sacred abode and entrance of religion is purified; and an interest in it, and an affection for the truth and the goodness in which its life is, will come into vigorous existence and activity. Let the young never forget, that chastity and religion go hand in hand; that neglect of the first excludes the last; and that coming into the one involves an absolute certainty of coming into the other also.

For the Committee,

JOSEPH PETTEE, *Chairman.*